THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) India and Nepal share a unique relationship of friendship and cooperation underpinned by ties of language, culture and kinship. This special relationship is also manifest in the open borders between the two countries. Government of India has always attached high priority to development of people-to-people relations with Nepal. Exceptionally liberal bilateral trade and transit treaties, generous development assistance programmes, scholarship schemes for Nepalese students, as well as a number of projects launched for improving infrastructure in the border areas have all contributed to strengthening people-to-people linkages.

India and Bangladesh have shared history and socio-cultural heritage and extensive people-to-peole contacts. The Indian High Commission in Dhaka issues approximately 500,000 visas every year for tourism, family visits and pilgrimages. A large number of Bangladeshis are studying in India on self-financing basis and over 100 on Government of India scholarships given annually. Many Bangladeshis visit India for medical treatment.

People-to-people contacts are also facilitated through cultural exchanges and human resouces development. The High Commission of India has an active cultural centre which regularly hosts cultural programmes. The centre also runs a library where Indian books and newspapers, including in Hindi and Bangla, are available.

India has contributed to the development of human resources in Bangladesh in the field of personnel training and institutional capacity. This has generated goodwill among the people of Bangladesh.

Confidence building measures between India and Pakistan

1738. DR.AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had submitted a 72 point agenda to Pakistan for confidence building in October 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the Pak response thereto;

(c) whether the same was later pared down to a 30 point agenda;

(d) if so, the details of the pruned down agenda; and

(e) the progress so far made in respect thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Government had, in the context of the Composite Dialogue, from June to September 2004, *inter alia,* recommended 72 proposals for Confidence Building in the areas of Peace and Security, Jammu and Kashmir, Economics and Commercial cooperation and Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in Various Fields.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Several proposals such as resumption of transport and communication links, restoration of strength of respective high commissions, resumption of sporting ties, operationalisation of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, steps towards release of fishermen and civilian prisoners under each other's custody, have been implemented by both sides. Some measures such as visa liberalization and free medical treatment of Pakistani children have been implemented unilaterally by us. On some other proposals, such as opening of Attari-Wagah land route for trade and transit for each other's goods, interactions between armed forces of both sides etc., response of Pakistan is still awaited.

Bilateral strategic talks with China

†1739. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNALAFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the issues raised by Government in bilateral strategic talks held with China by India;

(b) whether Government have lodged an objection on the information with regard to the military activities being carried out by China on Indian border;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.